



# 5. MERENDEROS

## ERNEST HEMINGWAY TOURIST ROUTE

### GENERAL ROUTE PLAN

1. Antigua Estación de El Grau
2. Estación Marítima
3. Antiga Grúa Portuària
4. Restaurante La Pepica
5. Merenderos
6. Platja de Les Arenes
7. Centro Cultural L'Escorxador
8. Museo del Mar – Casa dels Bous



On his trips to València, Hemingway visited several outdoor restaurants, or *barraquetas*, on Les Arenes and La Malva-rosa beaches. These simple constructions made of wood or reeds on the beach were managed by local families. The writer shared a table, tablecloth and, above all, conversation with friends that he later transferred to his novels.

In *Death in the Afternoon*, he advises: 'At València too, when it is hottest, you can eat down at the beach for a peseta or two pesetas at one of the eating pavilions where they will serve you beer and shrimps and a paella of rice, tomato, sweet peppers, saffron and good seafood, snails, crawfish, small fish, little eels, all cooked together in a saffron-colored mound. You can get this with a bottle of local wine for two pesetas'.

He describes the pavilion: 'Children will go by barelegged on the beach and there is a thatched roof over the pavilion, the sand cool under your feet, the sea with the fishermen sitting in the cool of the evening in the black felucca rigged boats that you can see, if you come to swim the next morning, being dragged up the beach by six yoke of oxen.'

His visits to these outdoor restaurants were also mentioned in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, one of the author's most important novels that was adapted to film in 1943 by Sam Wood, with Gary Cooper and Ingrid Bergman in the leading roles.

In this novel, he narrates four intense days during the Civil War of volunteer soldier Robert Jordan, who was assigned to blow up a strategic bridge to prevent the Nationalist counter-offensive: 'We



ate in pavilions on the sand. Pastries made of cooked and shredded fish and red and green peppers and small nuts like grains of rice. Pastries delicate and flaky and the fish of a richness that was incredible. Prawns fresh from the sea sprinkled with lime juice. They were pink and sweet and there were four bites to a prawn. Then we ate paella with fresh sea food, clams in their shells, mussels, crayfish, and small eels. Then we ate even smaller eels alone cooked in oil and as tiny as bean sprouts and curled in all directions and so tender they disappeared in the mouth without chewing. All the time drinking a white wine, cold, light, and good at thirty centimos the bottle. And for an end; melon. That is the home of the melon.'

A conversation in which he praises this fruit, comparing it with the melons grown in Castile:

'The melon of Castile is better,' Fernando said.

'Qué va,' said the woman of Pablo. 'The melon of Castile is for self abuse. The melon of València for eating.'

Everything points to the fact that the outdoor restaurant Hemingway refers to in this dialogue could have been the one run by Francisco Balaguer, husband of La Pepica, as in 1924, after a storm that destroyed the wooden installations, Balaguer and 44 neighbours erected permanent structures on the beach. These establishments evolved until many disappeared with the flooding in 1957.

Another of his works in which he mentions the outdoor restaurants is *Death in the Afternoon*, where he talks about three that were named Granero in honour of bullfighter Granero: 'Three of these eating shacks on the beach are named Granero, after the greatest bullfighter València ever produced, who was killed in the ring in Madrid in 1922.'

In a later interview with Waldo Peirce, he repeats the story of the three 'eating shacks' (he changes pavilion for eating shack) and, to praise his popularity, he says that Granero, who died in 1922 when a bull's horn destroyed his skull 'as if breaking a flower pot', he even had a 'pastry with his name'.

He considers Chaves, born in El Grau, to be a bullfighter who 'more than true bullfighting fans' only appeals to the people of València. In *Death in the Afternoon*, he speaks of how the people were first 'mad' about him and then 'turned on him'.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

**Address:** Platja de Les Arenes.

## **ACCESSIBILITY**

**Access:** Beach accessible via ramps and no steps.

**Parking:** Spots reserved for PRM nearby at 6.1 and 6.2. Neptú Promenade



IMAGES

